

23 December 1963

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : Cyprus

1. Cyprus is again in danger of becoming the scene of widespread violence similar to that during the Greek Cypriot struggle from 1955-1959 against British colonial rule. The first serious clashes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in over five years began on 21 December and were continuing as of 23 December. Spokesmen for both communities have charged the other with responsibility for the outbreak of violence. It is widely assumed in Cyprus that both communities have large, well-armed paramilitary forces ready to move into action on instruction from their leaders.

2. The present difficulties in the country were built in by the provisions of the Cyprus settlement of 1959, which contained specific guarantees to protect the separate but equal status of the Turkish minority. The Greek Cypriots have since attempted to ignore some of these guarantees, incorporated in the constitution, while the Turkish Cypriots have adamantly refused to modify them.

3. Greek Cypriots complain that the Turkish Cypriots have misused the veto powers held by the Turkish Cypriot vice president and by the Turkish Cypriot members of the House of Representatives. They also charge that other constitutional provisions are unworkable, e.g., one calling for separate municipalities for the two communities in the major cities, and another specifying that Turkish Cypriots must be allotted 30 percent of the civil service jobs. Greek Cypriots complain that not enough skilled Turkish Cypriots exist to fill this quota.

4. Turkish Cypriots, fearful of losing their status as a smaller but legally equal partner of the Greek Cypriots, have demanded that the provisions of the constitution be carried out to the letter. They charge that Greek Cypriot leaders have never attempted to implement the controversial constitutional provisions and there is thus no real basis for the contention that they are "unworkable."

5. On 30 November, the Cypriot President, Archbishop Makarios, handed to Vice President Kuchuk a lengthy document, written in "blunt but moderate" terms, proposing widespread changes in the constitution. While these changes included minor adjustments favorable to the Turkish Cypriots, their over-all effect would be to eliminate many of the basic Turkish guarantees. Copies of the document were supplied to the British, Greek, Turkish, and US governments.

6. By the terms of a treaty of guarantee drawn up in 1959, Britain, Greece, and Turkey guaranteed the "state of affairs" established by the basic articles of the constitution as well as the independence, territorial integrity, and security of the Cyprus republic. If the treaty is breached, the three nations may act jointly or separately to re-establish this "state of affairs." In addition, the 1959 settlement granted Greece and Turkey permission to station 950 and 650 troops, respectively, on the island.

7. The Turkish Government on 6 December announced that it had rejected Makarios' proposals. The Archbishop replied that the Turkish action was without meaning as the issue was an "internal matter" and an "information copy" only had been sent to Ankara. The Turkish Cypriots reportedly may take up to a month to reply to Makarios but are likely to follow Ankara's lead or make counterproposals that Makarios probably could not accept. Some of the more extremist Turkish Cypriots are now calling for physical partition of the island--a "solution" originally proposed in 1957 at the height of the Greek Cypriot - British struggle. The mixed distribution of Greek and Turkish Cypriots throughout the island precluded serious consideration of their proposal at that time.

8. Makarios has now replied to Ankara's public rejection of his proposal by declaring the Treaty of Guarantee "null and void." In a newspaper interview, published on 21 December, he denounced the treaty as infringing Cypriot independence and as violating the provisions of the United Nations Charter. He warned that he might take the entire issue before the UN. Turkish Cypriots view the treaty, including the provision for direct intervention by Turkey, as an essential safeguard against attempts to absorb their community in a Greek Cypriot state.

9. During the past year, both the Greek and British governments have cautioned Makarios against taking action which could result in a confrontation between the two communities. Makarios, however, feels that any Greek government has little choice but to support him in a showdown. He apparently hopes that London and Washington will put pressure on Ankara so as to prevent the situation from deteriorating further

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11. In addition to preventing direct involvement of American personnel in the Greek-Turkish dispute, the US has an interest in restricting the growth of Communism on Cyprus. The Cyprus Communist Party, one of the best organized and directed in the Middle East, has the support of about one third of the Greek Cypriot electorate. Party leaders have publicly stated that they support Makarios fully in his present campaign to change the constitution. By their advocacy of Greek Cypriot nationalism, the Communists have already gained acceptance among some previously hostile nationalist groups. Regardless

of the degree to which Makarios is successful in his current efforts to change the constitution, the Communists can claim that they would have asked for more concessions. Should Makarios fail completely or should violence intensify, the Communists will inherit a situation ripe for further exploitation.

12. Violence on Cyprus can also lead to very severe strains on Greek-Turkish relations, particularly in view of the possibility that the Greek and Turkish military contingents stationed on Cyprus may become involved.